



# PELHAM CITY SCHOOLS

January 3, 2022

Pelham Family,

We hope that everyone had a pleasant Christmas break, and we look forward to beginning 2022 with students back in our schools tomorrow, Tuesday, January 4.

Since there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases in our community over the break, we wanted to reach out with a few reminders and updates about our efforts to conduct school while we continue to face the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Please review the following information in detail.

## **COVID-19 Mitigation Levels**

At the beginning of the school year, Pelham City Schools established mitigation levels (based on information related to the Alpha and Delta variants) to help guide our decision making regarding the operation of our schools during the pandemic. With the emergence of the Omicron variant, we are gathering information and evaluating our mitigation levels to determine if changes should be made to the criteria. On January 4, we will resume school operations at Level 1, which is where we ended school before the Christmas break. We will closely monitor our data and positive cases this week as everyone returns to school and communicate any changes in procedures and guidelines as necessary.

## **Monitoring for Symptoms**

We strongly encourage students, staff, and parents to continuously and regularly self-monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#), and we ask that you do not send students to attend school or board a school bus if any symptoms are exhibited.

## **Face Coverings**

Face coverings are highly encouraged at this time, but they are not mandatory.

## **Voluntary COVID-19 Testing in Schools**

Pelham City Schools is partnering with University of Alabama Birmingham School of Public Health in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama State Department of Education to provide an additional mitigation initiative which offers free and voluntary asymptomatic COVID-19 testing for our students, faculty, and staff. Only students whose parents or legal guardians have given consent and only faculty and staff who have given consent will be tested.

Visit the [Voluntary COVID-19 Testing page](#) on the system website for details about the program, weekly schedules, and directions on how to opt-in to the voluntary COVID tests. Registration is open, and you can sign up at any time.

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**Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Case**

Students and staff members who have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis should complete the [COVID-19 Reporting Form](#). This form should be used instead of contacting a school principal, teacher, or school nurse. To complete the form in Spanish, [click here](#).

**Exposure Notifications**

We will continue to provide possible exposure notifications as we are informed of cases. Please understand that the process for generating notifications is time consuming, and we will do our best to provide information to parents/guardians. However, parents/guardians should be aware that there is a risk of exposure to COVID-19 in schools just as there is in most public settings.

**Quarantine & Isolation Guidelines**

Recently, the CDC updated its quarantine and isolation guidelines for the general public. However, those guidelines have not yet been specifically considered for the K-12 setting. We expect to have updated guidance from the ADPH and CDC soon and will communicate information as we receive it.

**Impact on Normal School Operations**

Since we do not yet know if the Omicron variant will impact our ability to conduct normal school operations, we ask that parents/guardians remain aware of the possibility that transportation and/or classroom teaching, sports, extracurriculars, field trips, etc. could be impacted if we have increased numbers of students, faculty, and staff that are affected by COVID-19. Please remain flexible and prepared to adjust to circumstances as necessary.

Our two main goals have not wavered – keep students in school and keep our schools open while doing so in a safe manner. We appreciate your continued patience and understanding as we work through the challenges of the pandemic together.

Be safe and stay well,

Dr. Scott Coefield  
Superintendent  
Pelham City Schools